



## Newsletter Summer 2011

### Welcome to Our Summer Newsletter

**Inspire** - To fill someone with the urge or ability to do something, especially something creative; to create a positive feeling in a person.

I feel privileged and blessed to be part of YWCA, a worldwide movement of women and girls who are clearly inspired and inspire us all to be the best that we can be.

With so many changes in the world around us, it is far too easy to focus on the people and situations that feel threatening or worrying. It's easy to overlook those who demonstrate talent, bravery and humanity in the face of adversity. But, how can we fail to be inspired by the steadfast courage of Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma or the compassion and unity of the people of Norway in the face of recent tragedy?

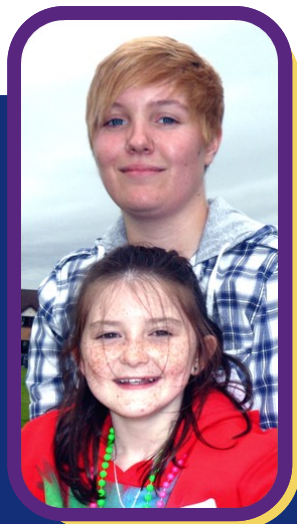
Within YWCA, there are so many young women and girls who are inspired and inspiring. In this newsletter, Rachael O'Byrne speaks of the inspiring leaders she met at the YWCA World Council and Women's Summit in Zurich. YWCA Scotland training has given youth workers skills and confidence to tackle abuse within young people's relationships. Our volunteers are leading by

example, helping younger children gain skills, self-esteem and have fun on our Playscheme. Young women who've struggled in school are given the chance to grow and gain confidence through a partnership between YWCA, schools and a local authority. Other young women talk about their journey with YWCA.

There will be more stories of Inspiring Women and Girls at our forthcoming Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 24th September 2011 in Livingston from 10 am to 2 pm. Further details will be circulated shortly, but keep the date in your diary and ensure you receive your invitation by emailing [reception@ywcascotland.org](mailto:reception@ywcascotland.org).

We can never know when something we do can have an impact on another. We all have the chance to be inspired and be inspiring.

- Kim Smith  
National Co-ordinator



# International Women's Summit and YWCA World Council 2011

By Rachael O'Byrne, YWCA Scotland Development Worker and YWCA of GB Delegate

Over the past week, I have been inspired, moved, challenged and motivated while attending the World YWCA's International Women's Summit and World Council in Zurich.

There were so many highlights of the week that made an impact on me, both on a personal and professional level, that it is difficult to condense it all for this article – I could write an essay on my time at World Council!

I am honoured to have met and listened to the world's most influential leaders who advocate for women's rights globally, and I am humbled to have heard stories from individuals of their experiences of women's and children's struggles from across the world. I am also inspired by the many young women I met who are leaders in the world movement today.

I am particularly proud to have Kirsty Kelly, who represents YWCA of Great Britain, re-elected onto the World YWCA Board. Kirsty showed real confidence and leadership throughout the week and proved that young women have an important leadership role to play within YWCA.

I discovered that although the work we do in YWCA Scotland may vary from other YWCAs across the globe, we also have many similarities. This really resonated with me while discussing SRHR (Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights). I explained that although Scotland has a good level



of Sex Education compared to other countries, particularly those in the developing world, we still have high rates of STIs and teen pregnancies. I then expressed YWCA Scotland's belief in developing confidence, self esteem and respect in girls from an early age; to provide them with the skills to make informed decisions with the information they are given. Many other women in the room from different countries agreed with this sentiment; although our experiences differed, confidence building was at the core of our work.

On a global level, I was touched by the resolution from YWCA Korea and YWCA Japan that called on the World YWCA movement to join forces to help strengthen women's and children's rights in North Korea. I was also moved by YWCA of Palestine's presentation calling on YWCAs to support the Olive Tree Campaign.

I am also proud that I volunteered to sit on the World Council Steering Committee as the European Region Representative. As part of this role I acted as an advocate for any member of World YWCA who had any pressing issues or concerns, and took part in additional meetings. I really enjoyed this role, which allowed me to help others during the World Council meetings and also influence preparations for the next World Council in 2015.

I have met so many wonderful people through this whole experience; my friends from the GB delegation, and many more inspiring women from around the world. I feel so privileged to have had this opportunity and I can't wait to share everything that I have learned.

The week in Zurich has been truly unforgettable and I could never have imagined the impact it would have on me.



# Getting to Know the YWCA Board!

Following the success of the last instalment of 'Getting to Know the Board' - in this issue we have interviewed our newest Board member, Laurie Gayle.

Laurie joined the Board in February this year and has already made a huge contribution to the organisation in meetings and through advisory roles.

**Name:** Laurie Gayle

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Edinburgh

## **What did you want to be when you grew up?**

I wanted to be Lois Lane! I was on my high school newspaper and though that was great experience, I didn't fancy the 'unsocial' hours that were constantly stressed as being part of the job. I still wouldn't mind marrying Superman, though.

## **What made you want to get involved with YWCA Scotland?**

I wanted to get involved with a charity that worked specifically with young women and really listened to what they were saying about their wants, needs and dreams. I felt I had something to offer the YWCA's Board in terms of my own skill set but the deciding factor was that I was set to learn so much more in return – and I have!

## **What do you do in your life outside YWCA Scotland? (e.g. work, hobbies, family, interests, etc.)**

I work for an international charity in Edinburgh and essentially problem-solve and number-crunch most days. To unwind from this, I love meeting up with friends and continuing my (futile) search for the best Tex-Mex in Scotland. I also enjoy cooking, gardening, karaoke, exploring the hidden Edinburgh and politicking.

## **What do you like best about being involved in the Board?**

I always leave the meetings feeling inspired and humbled by the work and dedication of the staff and the stories from our volunteers and the girls with whom we work. It's great to know that, at some level, I'm part of that.

## **What do you like least about it?**

The realisation that money (or lack thereof) is such a factor in how far we're able to see out the vision of our work. On the positive side, we've learnt to be really creative with how we use the money we've got so it yields the greatest impact.

## **What would you like to see different for young women and girls in Scotland in 10 years time?**

I want to see the various power structures in society put women and girls at the heart of their decision-making and I want to ensure they're constantly challenged, taken to task and held accountable by young women who are educated about their rights and positive about their own potential.



# Membership

YWCA Scotland has recently launched its new membership scheme.

Over recent months, YWCA Scotland has reviewed its system for membership to improve the way we engage with the people involved in and who support our activities and services. We have created a new leaflet to send out to our current members and to give to potential members in the future.



The leaflet explains the types of membership, what is involved and the fees for membership. Membership was last reviewed nearly eight years ago, so we have raised the fees slightly to account for increasing costs during that time. We have also included a category for those on a lower wage and we hope this will make membership accessible to more people.

You can find out all about the new membership scheme on our website, or to receive a copy of the leaflet please email: [adeline@ywcascotland.org](mailto:adeline@ywcascotland.org) or call National Office on 0131 558 8000.

We do hope you will want to help make a positive difference in the lives of young women and girls in Scotland through membership of YWCA Scotland.



## YWCA Livingston Summer Playscheme

YWCA in Livingston facilitated the Summer Playscheme again this year, which included games, environmental and creative activities, educational speakers and outings for more than fifty children aged 4-12 years in the Craigshill community during July and August. The project has run for over two

decades and remains the only summer holiday play scheme in the local area.

‘The YWCA Playscheme can be a lifeline for many families,’ according to Hilda Dolan, Development Worker at YWCA in Livingston. All spaces on the Playscheme—which aims to support young parents and families experiencing social and economic disadvantage—were filled quickly. Hilda added: ‘We had many new families asking for help this year.’

The programme not only benefits children and families. Seven volunteers, including young women from YWCA Livingston’s Intermediate and Senior Girls Groups, supported staff in the planning, delivering and evaluating of the project. This provided the opportunity for them to gain skills and confidence while using their ideas and experience to benefit the local community. Many of the young volunteers are working towards achievement of the Millennium Volunteer Award, which requires them to reach a total of 200 hours spent volunteering their time.

# Under Pressure – Training on Abuse and Exploitation in Teen Relationships

More than 70 youth and community workers took part in 'Under Pressure' - a series of day courses organised by YWCA Scotland in partnership with Zero Tolerance to improve strategies for addressing abuse and exploitation in young people's relationships. Courses took place in Ayr, Dundee, Edinburgh, Galashiels, Kirkcaldy and Livingston during May and June.

Two-thirds of workers said they'd felt concerned that young people they work with were involved in abusive relationships or at risk of sexual exploitation. According to one participant, 'There is a high level of teenagers in controlling relationships. They are unable to see this due to low self-esteem, are unable to remove themselves from relationships and tend to put up with a lot.'

Youth workers considered the causes, effects and signs of abuse or sexual exploitation through presentations and interactive exercises with a view to these being adapted for use within a youth work

setting. Participants were given a pack of resources on a memory stick and encouraged to consider how they would use what they had learned in their work with young men and women.

Nearly all participants reported that the course had met their expectations and that they gained something positive from taking part. YWCA Scotland will be following up on participants to find out how they applied learning to practice and will disseminate information on 'what works' more widely to maximise the impact of the project. YWCA and Zero Tolerance will explore opportunities for extending the work so that more youth workers and, ultimately, more young people can benefit from the initiative in future.



## YWCA Film and Drama Project

Young people from YWCA Livingston and West Lothian Youth Action have worked together with West Lothian Theatre Company, Firefly, to plan and make a short film about the risks of alcohol misuse, titled *Walk of Shame*. The ten young people taking part in early 2011 gained skills in drama and editing as well as further knowledge about how alcohol use affects them, their peers and the community.

The completed DVD was showcased in an event during the spring and disseminated to other groups of young people in the summer to help them gain more knowledge and make positive choices in their lives. The film is also available to view now on our website.

Geraldine Heaney, Firefly Theatre Production worker says: 'I've really enjoyed getting to know this group. Everyone has worked really hard on the project and it's been a lot of fun. I felt it was really important when working with such a serious topic that we really needed to have fun in the workshops. It's been a really creative process and I hope that the film can spark some discussion.'

YWCA Livingston member Anna added: 'I really enjoyed the film work as it brought our group closer. We had a great time and had a lot of fun'

We would also like to say a huge thanks to the band **Spaghetti Anywhere** for letting us use their song *Super Special* in the film!

# Nichola's Story

Nichola has been an active member of YWCA Scotland for 14 years, and has now sat on the Local Advisory Committee in Livingston for over a year. She has brought energy to the other members, sharing experiences of her progress through YWCA, beginning with her being a young girl who wasn't always confident in her abilities. She has come a long way since then, growing in confidence, participating in important research and many other opportunities. We are very proud to have Nichola as part of YWCA Scotland.

## My YWCA Scotland Experience

By Nichola

My name is Nichola, I'm 23 and I live in Livingston with my partner, Graham. I am currently working in Financial Services in Edinburgh and working my way up the ladder!

I first became a member of YWCA Scotland when I was 9 years old and started going to the summer play schemes, then gradually moved onto the youth clubs throughout the years.

When I was 15 I started going to the Girls Club every week. It was great having somewhere to go reliably each week, even if it was just to vent my frustrations of being a typical teenager! Everyone listened to what you had to say and never once were you judged on any view that you had.

During my time at the 'Y' I was given the amazing opportunity of going to Oslo, Norway as part of a youth exchange with the West Lothian Youth

Congress. I also created videos for young people on sexual health and drugs and alcohol. We were lucky enough to have our films shown at the Edinburgh Festival – even

receiving our very own 'Oscar' that is displayed proudly in the Livingston centre!

Over the last 14 years the YWCA has definitely become a huge part of my life. Not only has it allowed me to take part in some amazing projects—'The 104 pairs of shoes exhibition' being the most inspirational to me—but it's helped me gain the personal skills that are needed in everyday life. Confidence is the biggest thing I see young women lack and the 'Y' helps overcome this tremendously.

I don't think I would have got where I am today without being part of the YWCA Scotland family.



## YWCA Scotland Launches New Website and New Look eBulletin

As some of you will know, YWCA Scotland has been working on a brand new website for the last few months, and we are now very pleased to present the new site, which you can view at this address: [www.ywcascotland.org](http://www.ywcascotland.org).

The new and improved website is packed with information about YWCA Scotland, including projects, news, updates and features on service users and stories from Local Centres right up to World Council. The new site also has information about our new membership scheme, and other ways to get involved, including donating and volunteering.

You will also be able to sign up for our new-look eBulletin, which is now more streamlined and user-friendly, and join our Facebook and Twitter pages.

Please have a look and let us know what you think!

## Viewforth High School Girls Group Project

The Viewforth High School Girls Group is a partnership piece of work between Integrated Community Schools, Community Learning and Development and YWCA Scotland. The group is run and facilitated by Rachael O'Byrne (YWCA Scotland) and Sonia McCathie (Community Education Worker).

In November 2010 Sonia and Rachael met with Pupil Support at Viewforth High School (VHS) to discuss a project that would help develop the self esteem of a group of S3 pupils. The intended outcomes of the programme were to improve the confidence, self esteem and aspirations of participants by developing interpersonal skills, problem solving, communication and to encourage healthy lifestyles.

The programme commenced in January 2011 and runs weekly over a double school period at Kirkcaldy YWCA. The first term focussed on team building, communication skills, confidence and self esteem work. This was achieved through activities with the girls working on their own, in pairs and in groups to encourage them to share their thoughts and views. As the group has progressed the girls are beginning to challenge each other's perceptions, take on board new ideas and see things from other people's perspectives. One of the girls said: 'My self esteem is better. I now believe that I can be happy with who I am.'

The second term focussed on Health and Wellbeing, with the young women taking part in the 'underage and pregnant' programme,



a session with the 'virtual babies', healthy eating and physical activity. Another of the girls in the group said: 'I have learned how to say what I think about things without being worried about what people think. I enjoyed finding out about myself and building up my confidence.'

Although the group is primarily run during school time, the girls have expressed an interest in continuing the work during the summer holidays, so we have organised a one night residential to Ratho and a couple of planning sessions in the lead up to this.

Overarching the whole programme is ASDAN Bronze Youth Achievement Award and the girls are fully engaged in the awards scheme; they all have individual portfolios that they have created, demonstrating their learning and achievements to date.

This programme was a pilot and a new partnership for YWCA Scotland, and has been so successful that it is being rolled out to two other secondary schools in the Kirkcaldy area. YWCA Scotland is involved in one of these groups at St Andrews High School and we hope to include more groups in the Kirkcaldy area soon.



**WOMEN'S  
SUPPORT  
PROJECT**



## Pleasure vs. Profit

The Women's Support Project and Zero Tolerance have launched a new DVD resource, focusing on the impact of pornography on young people. The film explores the connections between sexualisation and the creep of pornographic images and values into mainstream culture, and focuses on the situation in Scotland.

With input from young people, police and activists, the film exposes how the porn industry manipulates young people's natural curiosity about sex and, in doing so, jeopardises their ability to explore their sexuality in a healthy way and at their own pace. To find out more and view the film, please visit: [www.zerotolerance.org.uk/pleasurevsprofit](http://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/pleasurevsprofit) or [www.womenssupportproject.co.uk](http://www.womenssupportproject.co.uk).

# New Faces at YWCA Scotland

We would like to officially welcome Michelle and Katie to the YWCA Scotland team. They have both joined us in the last few months and we thought that the latest newsletter would be a great opportunity to introduce them to all of our supporters.



Katie is joining our team as Volunteering Development Worker – a new post created earlier this year to expand upon YWCA Scotland’s Volunteer Programme.

Katie completed a Masters Degree at Glasgow University in Human Rights, specialising in Gender and Development studies. She began her career working in Youth Services with Stirling Council, supporting vulnerable young people who had been excluded from education. Following this, she worked for Move On, running a number of Mentoring and Peer Education Programmes. She has also had personal experience of volunteering over the last ten years working with the National Childrens Home, Samaritans, Linknet and Waverly Care.

Katie says that she has ‘always found volunteering to be extremely rewarding. I strongly believe in the power of volunteering and the difference it can make. The benefits impact not only on the volunteer and the service-user involved, but also contribute to creating more prosperous, inclusive and safer communities.’

Michelle joined our team in April as Senior Youth Worker – a new post in Kirkcaldy which was created in order to support, co-ordinate and oversee the current Girls Youth Group Programme.

Michelle has completed an HNC at Adam Smith College in Working with Communities. During the HNC she completed a placement with Kinetic Youth Theatre, where she worked with young people educating them on social issues through the medium of theatre and art. Michelle also volunteered, and then became a Sessional Worker with Fife Young Carers. Previous to this Michelle worked with Fife Childcare Strategy as a Deputy Play leader for the RNIB out of school club.



Michelle says: ‘Within my role at YWCA Scotland, I feel that educating girls and young women, and helping them to be more socially aware is really important. In my time with YWCA so far, I’ve enjoyed seeing increased confidence levels, changes in attitudes and increased social awareness in the girls we work with. I’ve also enjoyed sharing laughs with the girls, encouraging them to have fun and let themselves go - helping them to do so by making a fool of myself!!’

**To find out more about YWCA Scotland or support our work please contact us at:**

**reception@ywcascotland.org**

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**Or check out our website at:  
www.ywcascotland.org**

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